Daily update – April 16, 2020

A joint statement from Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry and Minister of Health Adrian Dix today announced 14 new cases of COVID-19 in B.C., bringing the total to date to 1,575 confirmed cases. Currently 120 people are hospitalized throughout the province as a result of the virus, with 56 patients in critical care, and 983 people fully recovered. In the Vancouver Coastal Health region, there have been 670 confirmed cases since the pandemic began.

The statement also reported outbreaks in 26 long-term care and assisted-living facilities, and in one acute care unit, including four facilities where outbreaks had previously been declared over. Unfortunately, there were three more deaths in the past 24 hours. We offer our condolences to everyone who has lost their loved ones.

Earlier today, the provincial government launched Here2Talk, a new mental-health counselling and referral service for post-secondary students. The service offers confidential, free single-session services by app, phone or online chat, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Learn more at here2talk.ca.

Also today, Minister of Finance Carole James announced enhanced relief for businesses by reducing most commercial property tax bills by an average of 25%, along with new measures to support local governments facing temporary revenue shortfalls as a result of COVID-19.

VCH Medical Health Officers, our provincial partners and the Public Health Agency of Canada continue to actively monitor the COVID-19 pandemic. To protect yourself while out in public, wash your hands frequently and maintain social distance. Anyone who has symptoms — including a fever, cough, sneezing, sore throat, or difficulty breathing — should self-isolate for 10 days, and seek medical care if symptoms do not improve 5-7 days following symptom onset.
Testing is available for the following groups if they develop a fever (over 38 degrees Celsius) and new onset (or exacerbation of chronic) cough or shortness of breath:

- Health care workers, including community pharmacists
- Residents of remote, isolated or Indigenous communities
- People living in congregate settings, such as work camps, correctional facilities, shelters, group homes, assisted living and seniors' residences
- People who are homeless or have unstable housing
- Essential services providers, including first responders
- Returning travellers identified at a point of entry to Canada

Testing is also recommended for the following groups if they develop any respiratory or gastrointestinal symptoms, however mild:

- Residents and staff of long-term care facilities
- Patients requiring admission to hospital or likely to be admitted, including pregnant individuals in their third trimester, patients on hemodialysis, or cancer patients receiving radiation or chemotherapy
- Patients who are part of an investigation of a cluster or outbreak as determined by the Medical Health Officer

Any physician can order a test for COVID-19 based on their clinical judgment. People who are asymptomatic should not be tested for COVID-19.
A self-assessment tool, developed with the BC Ministry of Health, will help determine whether you may need further assessment or testing for COVID-19. Find it at covid19.thrive.health, or download a self-assessment app for smartphones.

For more information and latest updates on COVID-19, follow the BC Centre for Disease Control on Twitter @CDCofBC or visit the website: http://www.bccdc.ca/